

A new home for the Wildlands Trust

SPECIAL TO THE CLIPPER

The Duxbury-based Wildlands Trust has entered into an agreement to purchase the Davis-Douglas Farm, a 10-acre property in the Six Ponds area which will serve as the organization's new permanent home. Long a scenic landmark along Long Pond Road, this small farm is currently owned by the Bongiovanni Family.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to save a beautiful piece of land and to restore the very interesting farmhouse that has been part of the landscape for over a century," said Charlotte Russell, long-time Wildlands Trust board member. "We look forward to welcoming the Trust back home."

The Wildlands Trust, a regional land trust serving all of southeastern Massachusetts, was based in Plymouth from 1973 until 1995. Since it was founded, the organization has conserved nearly 7,000 acres of land, much of it within the Town of Plymouth.

"In 1995, the Trust moved from Plymouth to Duxbury to make its home in a small building at the back of the 5-acre Philbrick Preserve," said Karen Grey, executive director of Wildlands Trust. "We have always been grateful to Helen Philbrick for donating our first office space, but we've known for some time that it was not a permanent solution. The space was adequate for four or five people, but today we have a full-time staff of ten and everything from offices to bathrooms to parking has become a challenge."

Davis-Douglas Farm is a

dream property for the Trust. Besides being an important land protection project, it will provide the Trust with ample space for staff, stewardship equipment, and outreach programs. It is still very much in the planning stages, but the Trust hopes to rebuild the barn for community education programs and presentations. They also plan to host a community garden on the property, similar to the one they've had in Duxbury for the past three years.

The Davis-Douglas Farm was once part of Howland Davis' estate on Long Pond, and the Bongiovanni Family has designated that the property be named "Davis-Douglas Farm" to honor both Howland Davis and their grandfather, Percy Douglas, who farmed the land for many years.

"The property holds tremendous meaning to my family and we couldn't be happier with the outcome," said David Bongiovanni. "We support the Trust's plans and are thrilled to know that the property will look very similar to how it has looked for the last hundred years."

A fundraising campaign will get underway later this summer and the Trust hopes to begin work on the property next spring.

An added benefit for the Trust is that the farm is within a mile of almost one-third of its holdings. "Our Plymouth properties get tremendous public use and it will be a lot easier for us to care for them when we are permanently located in the community," said Grey.

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